

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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HOUSE BILL 356*

Short Title: Customer Srvc., Econ. Dev., and Transport'n. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Moffitt, Howard, Collins, and Murry (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.

Referred to: Transportation, if favorable, Environment, if favorable, Commerce and Job Development, if favorable, Appropriations.

March 21, 2013

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH UNIFORM GEOGRAPHICAL ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS FOR THE STATE, TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO TAKE ACTION TO ALIGN THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS WITH THESE UNIFORM REGIONS, AND TO CREATE THE COMMISSION ON REGIONALIZATION CONFORMITY TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONFORMING (I) THE EXISTING REGIONAL DIVISIONS OF THE SEVEN REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS TO THE UNIFORM DIVISIONS AND (II) TO DEVELOP A SCHEDULE FOR STUDYING THE REGIONAL DIVISIONS OF OTHER STATE AGENCIES THAT HAVE REGIONAL OFFICES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. CREATION OF UNIFORM REGIONAL DIVISIONS.

SECTION 1.(a) Intent to Create Uniform Regional Divisions. – It is the intent of the General Assembly to establish geographically uniform administrative regions in this State for State agencies that have regional offices and, to the extent feasible, to consolidate regional offices and to establish a one-stop source in each region for citizens and businesses seeking State services at a regional office.

SECTION 1.(b) Article 1 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 143B-28.1. Uniform regional administrative divisions.

For purposes of regionalization conformity, the State is hereby divided into seven regions as follows:

- (1) Region I, consisting of Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Heywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey Counties.
- (2) Region II, consisting of Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yadkin Counties.
- (3) Region III, consisting of Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Orange, Rockingham, Rowan, and Stokes Counties.



- 1 (4) Region IV, consisting of Anson, Cabarrus, Chatham, Hoke, Lee,
2 Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond, Scotland, Stanly,
3 and Union Counties.
- 4 (5) Region V, consisting of Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax,
5 Johnston, Nash, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne, and Wilson
6 Counties.
- 7 (6) Region VI, consisting of Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland,
8 Duplin, Harnett, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Robeson, and Sampson
9 Counties.
- 10 (7) Region VII, consisting of Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Carteret, Chowan,
11 Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir,
12 Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell, and
13 Washington Counties."

14 **SECTION 1.(c)** This Part becomes effective July 1, 2013.

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16 **PART II. IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIFORM REGIONAL DIVISIONS IN**
17 **PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION**
18 **AND ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES.**

19 **SECTION 2.(a)** DOT and DENR to Develop Plan to Implement Uniform Regions
20 and to Establish One-Stop Services. – The Department of Transportation and the Department of
21 Environment and Natural Resources shall, in cooperation with each other, develop a plan to
22 align their administrative regions with the regions set out in G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by
23 Section 1 of this act. The plan shall include the following:

- 24 (1) Establishment of regional offices that are either shared or in the same
25 location.
- 26 (2) Steps necessary to create efficient, economical, and user-friendly one-stop
27 regional services for citizens and businesses. These may include shared
28 frontline staff, staff cross-trained in the basic requirements for permits issued
29 by both department, or a combination; consolidation of programs or services
30 and identification of any statutory or other legal impediments.
- 31 (3) Identification of equipment and support services that may be efficiently and
32 economically shared at shared regional facilities.
- 33 (4) Identification of any savings or additional costs reasonably likely to result
34 from the requirements of this section.
- 35 (5) A time line for completion of the plan.

36 **SECTION 2.(b)** Implementation of Plan and Reports. – The Departments of
37 Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources shall jointly report on the plan
38 developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to the Chairs of the House Appropriations
39 Committee and the Cochairs of the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee no later
40 than June 1, 2013. The Departments of Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources
41 shall begin implementation of the plan no later than July 1, 2013, and shall provide quarterly
42 reports on its implementation by October 1, 2013, January 1, 2014, and April 1, 2014, and more
43 frequently, if requested, to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity created in
44 Section 4 of this act and to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee and the
45 Environmental Review Commission.

46 **SECTION 2.(c)** The Department of Transportation and the Department of
47 Environment and Natural Resources shall use funds available to carry out the requirements of
48 this section.

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50 **PART III. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO STUDY REGIONAL ECONOMIC**
51 **DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS.**

1 **SECTION 3.(a)** Department of Commerce Recommendations. – The Department
2 of Commerce shall study and make recommendations on:

- 3 (1) How the four regional economic development commissions created in
4 Chapter 158 of the General Statutes (the Western North Carolina Regional
5 Economic Development Commission (AdvantageWest), North Carolina's
6 Northeast Commission, the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Economic
7 Development Commission, and North Carolina's Eastern Region
8 Development Commission) and the three regional economic development
9 partnerships (the Charlotte Regional Partnership, Inc., the Piedmont Triad
10 Regional partnership, and the Research Triangle Regional Partnership) may
11 be most efficiently and economically aligned with the regions set out in
12 G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by Section 1 of this act, and what action is
13 needed to implement the recommended changes, including any necessary
14 legislation.
- 15 (2) Ways the programs and activities of the four regional economic development
16 commissions and the three regional economic development partnerships can
17 be best coordinated with those of the Department of Commerce and with
18 other State agencies to create one-stop regional services for citizens and
19 businesses.

20 In developing its recommendations, the Department shall consult with the four
21 commissions and three partnerships. The Department shall also identify any savings or
22 additional costs likely to result from the realignment of the commissions and partnerships,
23 including any possibilities for them to leverage private funding whenever possible.

24 **SECTION 3.(b)** Report; Funds. – The Department of Commerce shall report its
25 recommendations to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity created in Section
26 4 of this act no later than September 1, 2013. The Department shall use funds otherwise
27 available to conduct the study.

28 29 **PART IV. STUDY COMMISSION ON REGIONALIZATION CONFORMITY.**

30 **SECTION 4.1.(a)** Creation of Commission. – The Study Commission on
31 Regionalization Conformity is established in the General Assembly.

32 **SECTION 4.1.(b)** Membership. – The Study Commission on Regionalization
33 Conformity shall consist of eight members, four members of the Senate appointed by the
34 President Pro Tempore of the Senate and four members of the House of Representatives
35 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

36 **SECTION 4.1.(c)** Cochairs; Vacancies; Quorum. – The Study Commission on
37 Regionalization Conformity shall have two cochairs, one designated by the President Pro
38 Tempore of the Senate and one designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives
39 from among their respective appointees. The Commission shall meet upon the call of the
40 cochairs. Any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by the original appointing authority.
41 A majority of the members of the Commission constitutes a quorum.

42 **SECTION 4.1.(d)** Compensation; Administration. – Members of the Study
43 Commission on Regionalization Conformity shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel
44 allowances in accordance with G.S. 120-3.1. The Commission, while in the discharge of its
45 official duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1
46 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the
47 Legislative Office Building.

48 With approval of the Legislative Services Commission, the Legislative Services
49 Officer shall assign professional staff to assist the Study Commission on Regionalization
50 Conformity in its work. The House of Representatives' and the Senate's Directors of Legislative
51 Assistants shall assign clerical staff to the Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity,

1 and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the Commission. The
2 Study Commission on Regionalization Conformity may contract for professional, clerical, or
3 consultant services, as provided by G.S. 120-32.02.

4 **SECTION 4.2.(a) Duties.** – The Study Commission on Regionalization
5 Conformity shall review the recommendations submitted by the Department of Commerce
6 pursuant to Section 3 of this act and any other information the Commission deems relevant.
7 After conducting its review, the Commission shall recommend to the 2014 Regular Session of
8 the 2013 General Assembly a plan for aligning the seven regional commissions and
9 partnerships with the regions set out in G.S. 143B-28.1 as enacted by Section 1 of this act. The
10 recommendations shall include requiring local commerce entities to leverage private funding
11 whenever possible, a proposed time line for implementation, and any required legislation,
12 including conforming amendments. The report containing the recommendations shall identify
13 any savings or costs identified by the Commission as likely to result from its recommendations.

14 **SECTION 4.2.(b) Additional Study.** – The Study Commission on Regionalization
15 Conformity may also:

- 16 (1) After reviewing the quarterly reports submitted jointly by the Departments
17 of Transportation and Environment and Natural Resources pursuant to
18 Section 2 of this act and any other information the Commission deems
19 relevant, recommend additional legislation, including conforming statutory
20 amendments, that may be necessary to complete the implementation of the
21 plan developed by the Departments pursuant to Section 2 of this act.
- 22 (2) Identify other State departments, agencies, boards, and commissions with
23 regional offices that should be aligned with the uniform regional divisions
24 established in G.S. 143B-28.1, as enacted by Section 1 of this act, and a
25 proposed schedule for studying how to best align them.
- 26 (3) Study and identify whether there are (i) opportunities for citizens and
27 businesses seeking services from State departments and agencies, especially
28 in connection with permitting, or (ii) activities performed by State
29 Departments and agencies at regional offices that could be better done by
30 that entity's office in Raleigh, through the Internet or other means, or that
31 could be better done at the county or local level.

32 **SECTION 4.2.(c) Report.** – The Study Commission on Regionalization
33 Conformity shall report its recommendations under this section to the 2014 Regular Session of
34 the 2013 General Assembly.

35 **SECTION 4.2.(d) Agency Cooperation.** – All State departments and agencies and
36 local governments and their subdivisions shall furnish the Study Commission on
37 Regionalization Conformity with any information in their possession or available to them.

38 **SECTION 4.2.(e) Commission Termination.** – The Study Commission on
39 Regionalization Conformity shall terminate on the filing of its report.

40 **PART V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND CONSTRUCTION.**

41 **SECTION 5.(a)** Nothing in this act shall be construed to obligate the General
42 Assembly to appropriate funds to implement this act.

43 **SECTION 5.(b)** Except as otherwise provided in this act, this act is effective when
44 it becomes law.
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